

# JUNIOR REPORT

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

The numbers continue to stack up for the Moonee Valley Cricket Club junior program – and they all look positive.

In the 2007/08 season we had 14 teams, played 168 players, had 58 first-time players at the Club and offered the variety and range which our families wanted – including Sunday cricket.

Seven of our 10 eligible teams competed in the finals. Under 10s – where we had four teams – do not play finals.

The seven Moonee Valley teams which competed in semi-finals was the most of any club in the North West Cricket Association – as was the four teams which won through to grand finals and the three which won premierships.

Four of our players won competition awards – Daniel Comande for bowling in Under 14s, Emily Wilson for bowling in the Under 14 Girls, Kurtis Tankard for bowling in Under 12s and Guy Walker as the best player in the Under 12 Mitchell Shield competition.

Premierships and player recognition are a wonderful achievement for our Club and the players concerned – but they are not the gauge we use for success at Moonee Valley.

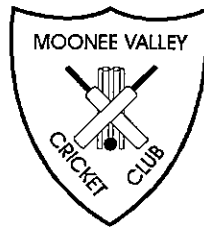
We had a successful season – measured by the number of players taking to the field, the number of new players we have introduced to cricket and the growth and development of those players under our junior program.

I congratulate the players and officials involved in the Premiership teams, but just as importantly commend all the young men and women who represented Moonee Valley as they are all senior cricketers of the future.

### Junior development

Our junior development program is also making a major contribution to the strength and future success of our senior Club. Across the course of the season some 29 players who have graduated from our junior program played senior cricket, and a further 38 boys – and girls – who were still in the juniors played one or more senior games. The steady influx of ready-made senior cricketers is a significant factor in our growth from four to nine senior teams over the past five seasons.

Two of our senior teams made the finals this season – and seven players still in junior ranks competed in the finals games. Our Fifts just missed the campaign when we lost a



dispute with the association over match points – and had the team made the finals a further five Under 16s were eligible and in line for selection.

In terms of junior involvement, we can't forget the parents.

In 2007/08, 39 fathers – and mothers – of players either in juniors or who have graduated to senior ranks also played cricket with Moonee Valley. Many of the dads got to play a game of competitive sport with their sons, while our inaugural women's team – the majority of them mums in our Club – was a sign of things to come.

I would like to pay tribute to our junior coaches – Simon Payton in Under 16s; Domenic Chiera, Kevin Gardiner, Steve Malone, John O'Brien and Joe Carroll in Under 14s; Phill King and Allan Cumming with the Girls; Glenn Perussich, Jim Morton and David Carew in Under 12s; and Darren Nagle, Paul Hobbs, Raff Lunardi and Chris Bibby in Under 10s. The assistants, team managers and helpers are too numerous to individually mention here, but I thank them too.

A number of our coaches had not planned a season in charge when we commenced training, but when we needed someone to step forward – sometimes even reluctantly – they rose to the challenge. I thank them sincerely, as our junior program at Moonee Valley has always been parent-driven and with the majority of our coaches being parents this ensures that our program reflects what we as families hold important.

I thank Kevin Gardiner and Steve Malone for the key role they play in co-ordination and selection of players in the age groups, ensuring that the sometimes-delicate task of shifting players across Saturday and Sunday fixtures is carried out to the best advantage of team balance.

Two of our coaches – John O'Brien and Joe Carroll – were Under 16 players in 2006/07, and we should all thank these wonderful young men for putting something back into the Club where they played their junior cricket.

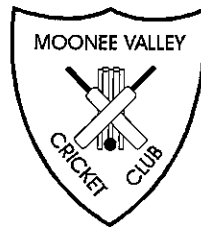
### **Our players**

Moonee Valley Cricket Club has just completed 12 years of juniors, and we've come a long way since we took to the field with just one Under 10 and one Under 12 team in 1996.

It has been my privilege to be junior co-ordinator for the past seven seasons, and to have been involved with the junior committee for all 12 of its existence.

Our 168 junior players compares with 153 in 2006/07, 142 the previous year, and well up on the 114 who played in 2004/05.

Our close relationship with the Moonee Valley Football Club and liaison with local schools ensures we are seen as a pathway to cricket for many local families. A birthdate



analysis of the 2007/08 playing list indicates we are likely to have even more junior teams next season.

We continue to unearth stars of the future in the Under 10s, and for the first time fielded four teams in that age group.

### **Teams and grounds**

With all our junior teams, finding grounds to play them on can be a tussle. Our long-term relationship with Moonee Ponds Central School again provided us with an Under 12 ground, and we are grateful for the school's ongoing support. We have also taken on the Debney Park oval long-term as both a senior and junior ground.

The Moonee Valley Cricket Club has a bright future at all levels, and is seen as a pacesetter in the district in areas such as the growth of senior teams, women's cricket, girls' cricket and the growth and development of juniors.

I'm proud that juniors continues to play such a positive role in the future of the Moonee Valley Cricket Club.

**Graeme "Charlie" Walker.**  
**Junior Co-ordinator.**